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ON THE OFFICES OF CHRIST:

A Sermon

BY THE LATE RT. REV. JOHN HENRY HOBART, D. D.

Jeremiah xxiii. 6.—"*And this is the name whereby he shall be called—The* LORD *our Righteousness.*

THE prophet, in the verses connected with my text, predicts the coming of the Messiah, and exhibits his glorious offices as "a King who should reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely."

Of this Messiah, who "in the fulness of time" appeared in the person of CHRIST, my text affirms—"This is the name whereby he shall be called—The LORD our Righteousness"—in the idiom of the sacred language equivalent to saying—He shall be—The LORD our Righteousness. Thus where it is said of this same blessed personage, that his name shall be called Immanuel—the meaning is, that he shall be Immanuel—GOD with us—as when it is said—"Jerusalem shall be called an holy city:" the meaning obviously is, Jerusalem shall be an holy city.

Thus then, my text, in calling the Messiah, CHRIST our LORD, JEHOVAH, establishes his divinity. For JEHOVAH is the name that denotes the essence, the infinite, eternal, and immutable nature of GOD; and therefore, to apply it to any created being, would be the most tremendous blasphemy. JESUS CHRIST then, the Messiah, is JEHOVAH—"GOD over all," as styled by the apostle.

It is my intention, however, to enlarge not on the divinity of

Christ as JEHOVAH, but on the other character ascribed to him in my text as "our Righteousness."

In what respects does CHRIST become the justifier, the righteousness of his people? is the inquiry I mean to prosecute.

CHRIST becomes the "righteousness" of his people, of those who believe in him.

I. As their *Atoning Mediator.*

II. As their *Evangelical Lawgiver*, and

III. As their *Almighty Sanctifier.*

As their atoning *Mediator*, he procures the pardon of their sins. As their *Lawgiver*, he places them under an evangelical law, obedience to which will secure to them the favor of GOD. And as their *Sanctifier*, he impresses this law on their hearts, and enables them sincerely to obey it. He thus becomes their righteousness, completely justifies them, by freeing them from the guilt and dominion of sin, and by renewing them to holiness, thus releasing them from the wrath of GOD, and restoring them to his favor.

But in considering the various characters in which CHRIST becomes the righteousness of his people, it is necessary to bring into view in all these respects, his *Divinity.* It is *this* which gives full effect to his agency as our Mediator, Lawgiver, and Sanctifier. And it is *this*, his divine character as "JEHOVAH," which, in the view of all his offices, infinitely augments our duties and our encouragements.

Exhibiting then CHRIST not only in the various offices in which he becomes "our Righteousness," but in connexion with each, his divine power as JEHOVAH, I shall, I conceive, have fully exhibited him to your grateful adoration, confidence, and obedience, as "JEHOVAH our *Righteousness.*"

I. CHRIST becomes the righteousness of those who believe in him—as their *Atoning Mediator.*

Fact, as well as Scripture, affirm the truth, that man is a fallen creature, subject to the displeasure of the infinitely good, and holy and just Being, whose laws as his Maker and Sovereign, he has transgressed, and to whom as his Judge he is accountable.

Of the Jews, on whom GOD bestowed the revelation of his will in the precepts and institutions of the Law, as well as of the Gentiles, who were left to the light of natural reason and traditional religion, sad was the denunciation of the apostle.—They "have all gone out of the way—they have altogether become unprofitable —there is none that doeth good, no not one."

The first step, therefore, in the recovery of fallen man, subject as he is, on account of his transgressions, to the displeasure of his Maker, is to free him from that penalty, by sustaining it; and to obey, and thus to satisfy the just and holy law of GOD, which man has violated; in other words—*to make expiation for man's guilt.* But how could man make this expiation? The most perfect obedience which he could render, would only be discharging the obligations already incumbent on him, and therefore could not atone for past transgressions, nor entitle him to a release from the penalty of his Maker's wrath, which by those transgressions he had justly incurred. It is evident that man, as a sinner, must have a righteousness better, *infinitely* better, than his own, even that divine, all perfect righteousness of the SON of GOD, by which the claims of the divine law were satisfied to the uttermost, and fallen man released from its penalties.

The SON, the second person of the Godhead, "JEHOVAH," became "our righteousness." In our nature he became subject to that law by which we were bound, and *fully* obeyed it. In our nature he sustained the penalties of that law which we had transgressed, which was *death;* and thus the blood which he shed, became a fountain, in which the deepest stains of sin might be washed away in our nature. By virtue of his all perfect obedience and all sufficient atonement, the SON becomes vested by the FATHER with power as Mediator, to release from their sins all that come to him. "If any man sin, he has an advocate with the FATHER, even JESUS CHRIST the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. Whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out."

Salvation, is thus of grace, free unmerited grace, not of works, lest any man should boast. To the humble and penitent, who feel and acknowledge their subjection to sin, and flee for refuge

from the wrath denounced against them to JESUS CHRIST, "JEHOVAH their Righteousness," he dispenses the fulness of pardon. Those who thus come unto him by faith, he justifies from sin—releases them from its penalty, and puts them into a state of reconciliation with GOD. In his office of Atoning Mediator, JESUS CHRIST becomes the righteousness of his people, in whom *alone* they are pardoned and restored to the favor of GOD.

But it is his character and power as "JEHOVAH" the LORD which renders CHRIST a *prevailing* Mediator. Unsanctified by his Godhead, the blood which he shed as man would be of little more avail than the blood of bulls or goats, which, rested in as of themselves efficacious, became an abomination unto the LORD. Unsanctified by his Godhead, the obedience which he rendered would be only the debt of obligation which every creature owes to its Creator, and would be of no efficacy towards atoning for the transgressions of the whole race of mankind. But the blood of the *incarnate Son of God*, is of infinite efficacy. The obedience which *he*, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, rendered, partakes of the glory of the Godhead, and sheds infinite lustre on the divine law. Sprinkled with that blood which the Godhead hath enriched, the penitent sinner fears not the wrath of the destroying angel of justice. Covered with that righteousness with which the Godhead hath invested him, the true believer can stand even the searching beams of divine holiness.

Behold then, my brethren, both the *way* by which we are to be justified from our sins, and our *encouragement* to apply for mercy. The atonement of CHRIST, the LORD our Righteousness, it the *only* meritorious cause of our pardon. In a deep sense of our need of this atonement as guilty, depraved sinners, we *must* apply for an interest in it. Washed by *this* blood, we shall be justified in the sight of GOD. Our sins that were "as scarlet," shall become "white as snow;" though they were "red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The penalties of the divine law which we had violated, were sustained by the SON of GOD, and its glory vindicated by his all perfect obedience. Access, through him, is thus opened to that throne, which from the unsparing throne of justice is changed into the attractive throne of grace and mercy.

He, who is our Intercessor, the LORD our Righteousness, is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto GOD through him. Distrust not that mercy which is infinite; repose with confidence on *that* grace which is Almighty—JEHOVAH is our righteousness!

In the justification of fallen man, the first step is to release him from the guilt and condemnation of his sins, and to put him into a state of reconciliation with GOD. This work, to which no created agency is adequate, is effected by the all-sufficient atonement of CHRIST JESUS the LORD as Mediator. In this part of the process of justification, no qualifications are required on the part of man, but a *lively* sense of his need of mercy, and a *full* reliance on the propitiation of the LORD his righteousness. But as he is to be fitted for eternal happiness by the love and service of his Maker, a rule of duty must be prescribed and imposed on him. CHRIST therefore becomes the righteousness of his people—

II. As their *Lawgiver*—imposing on them a law of evangelical holiness and perfection.

In his first estate, man was subject to a law, whose rewards were granted only to unsinning obedience, and whose fatal penalty was —"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." By transgressing this law, he fell into a state of guilt and condemnation. From its penalties, and from its obligation as a law of unsinning obedience, he is released by the evangelical covenant. But "is the law made void through grace?" GOD forbid. CHRIST "came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." GOD is unchangeably holy. His happiness is founded on his holiness; and no creature can be happy but as he resembles GOD. "Without holiness, no man shall see the LORD."

In the work of redemption, therefore, which was designed to conduct man to perfect and eternal happiness, it was absolutely necessary that he should be made subject to a law, holy and spiritual, by which the divine image, in which he was created, but which he lost at the fall, might be restored to his soul. This law it was part of the office of CHRIST, the LORD our Righteousness, to delineate and prescribe. On those, therefore, whom, as Mediator, he releases from the guilt of sin, he imposes a law of holiness, which extends through the whole sphere of religous and moral

duty; and which is designed to regulate and purify the inmost principles of the heart. Though these believers are freed from the obligation of the law of works, which requires unsinning obedience; they are placed under a law of *grace*, not less holy and spiritual, in which sincere obedience, which is all that they can render, is accepted through him, who alone is their all-perfect righteousness.

And shall they "sin, because they are not under the law, but under grace?" God forbid. "Being made free from sin," as the apostle argues, "they are made servants of righteousness." "Dead unto sin, they are made alive unto GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord." They are translated from a state of sin and condemnation, into a state of favor and evangelical holiness. Deliverance from the guilt of sin is but a prelude in the work of justification to deliverance from its power. The atonement of CHRIST has released the sinner from the curse of a violated law. But the blessed work of redemption would be frustrated were the subject of divine mercy absolved from the obligation of the law, and while he exults in the mercy, could defy the holiness of GOD. The destiny of man which the scheme of redemption is designed to further and to secure, is to be eternally happy in the presence of GOD. For *this* presence, holiness is an indispensable qualification. In the justification of those who believe, therefore, CHRIST acts not only as Mediator, procuring their pardon, but also as Lawgiver, delineating the nature and extent, and enforcing the obligations of the divine law. In this character, we are to acknowledge, receive, and obey him, and he thus becomes "the LORD our Righteousness."

It is the divine character of CHRIST as "JEHOVAH," the LORD, which gives awful yet affecting energy and dignity to his office as our *Lawgiver*, and to the obligations, and sanctions of his laws. How holy and spiritual must those laws be which the Godhead promulgated not by prophets, men of unclean lips, but by the eternal SON, who is *himself* "JEHOVAH." Viewing the Son as thus possessing all the *powers* of the Godhead, when we regard him as our Lawgiver, we are impressed with awe and terror, like that which penetrated the Israelites at the foot of Sinai! But when we consider the infinite *condescension* of the LORD of Glory

in taking upon him our nature, that he might appear a more compassionate instructer, and teach us, not only by his plain and powerful precepts, but by his familiar and blessed example, we are penetrated with emotions of affection and gratitude, like those which the beloved disciple must have felt, when he reclined on the bosom of his Divine Master, and drank in the instructions of his lips.

The law of CHRIST, as JEHOVAH our Lawgiver, is thus enforced by the united influence of the sentiments of fear and love. We fear to offend a Lawgiver, who, as JEHOVAH, searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men; who penetrates through the darkness of night, and will bring unto judgment every secret thing; and who is able to destroy forever both soul and body. The lively emotions of affection prompt us to yield a cheerful and devoted obedience to him, who, the eternal SON, JEHOVAH, yet took upon him our frail and miserable nature, to suffer and to die, that we might live forever.

CHRIST, therefore, becomes the righteousness of his people by subjecting them to a holy and spiritual law; and they, who, through faith, have received him as their Mediator, are bound to acknowledge him as their *Lawgiver*, and submit to his authority, in order that the dominion of sin may be subdued, and the reign of grace and holiness supremely established in their hearts.

This leads me to consider the third respect in which CHRIST becomes our *righteousness*—

III. As our ALMIGHTY *Sanctifier*—who impresses on our hearts the obligation of the divine law, and enables us to obey it.

The purpose of our merciful and gracious GOD in our redemption would be but imperfectly answered by releasing us from the guilt of our sins, and subjecting us to a more holy and spiritual law. Deliverance from the *guilt* of our sins is the consequence of our earnest desire to be released from their *dominion*. But this blessed work is hereafter to be accomplished. The holiness and spirituality of the law to which we are subjected would, through the frailty and corruption of our nature, only multiply and aggravate our transgressions, and thus minister to our heavier condemnation. To our final justification, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that

provision be made for releasing us from the dominion of sin, and for renovating and changing our hearts, that we may be able to serve GOD in newness of spirit, and in holiness of life. CHRIST acts not only as *Mediator*, granting to us forgiveness; as *Lawgiver*, subjecting us to a law of duty; but as an Almighty Sanctifier, writing this law on our minds, and imbuing us with its holy spirit and virtue. By the operations of that blessed Comforter which he promised, and sent unto his Church, he performs this work of sanctification in the hearts of believers. They are "chosen," saith the apostle, "unto salvation, through *sanctification* of the SPIRIT." They are *sanctified* by the SPIRIT of GOD.

It is thus, by the agency of the SPIRIT, that CHRIST completes his character "as our Righteousness;" enlightening our understandings, to discern the purity and exellency of his law; placing our affections upon it, as our supreme good; inclining our wills to a conformity with its holy precepts; giving us a clean heart and a right spirit; and creating us *anew* unto good works. The divine image being thus restored to our souls, we become the object of GOD'S favor, and are prepared for his blissful presence. In infinite mercy he grants this HOLY SPIRIT to our earnest prayers, and to our devout participation of the ordinances of his Church, his mystical body. In the use of these means, his unchanging promise seals to us the influences of his SPIRIT, so that we abound in every good word and work, in the fruits of righteousness, meekness, and truth. Thus is complete provision made for our release from the bondage of sin, and our being reinstated in all the graces and virtues of the divine image.

It is the divinity of CHRIST which gives Almighty energy to his agency as our *Sanctifier*. Redeemed from the bondage of sin, renewed in all holy graces, guided in the way of GOD'S law and in the works of his commandments, by the Almighty agency of "JEHOVAH our Righteousness," our own perverse and wilful rebellion alone can frustrate our sanctification, and our eternal restoration to the favor of GOD.

Behold now, my brethren, in what respects CHRIST may be considered as "the LORD our Righteousness," as our divine *Mediator*, he makes a perfect atonement for our sins, and grants to us

forgiveness, as our divine *Lawgiver*, he subjects us to his evangelical law, which inculcates universal holiness. As our Almighty *Sanctifier*, he releases us from the bondage of sin, and grants us grace strictly and universally to obey his holy precepts.

Let us then learn—

1. To ascribe our salvation to the *free* and unmerited *grace* of GOD.

JEHOVAH is "our Righteousness." In our fallen state, no arm but his could save us. Our wilful transgressions separated us from the favor of GOD, and rendered us obnoxious to his justice. Depraved and guilty, we could neither make propitiation for the past, nor secure our obedience for the future. So incapable is man, independently of the grace of JEHOVAH his Righteousness, of any effectual efforts toward his salvation, that his deplorable condition is designated by the emphatic language "*dead* in trespasses and sins." Even of the law of GOD, in its spiritual nature and full extent, *unrenewed* man is ignorant; for it is an inspired declaration, "The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the spirit of GOD, neither indeed can he, because they are *spiritually* discerned." While he is thus "alienated from the life of GOD," and an "enemy to GOD through wicked works," it would be folly to suppose that of himself he would break the chains of his bondage, and, renouncing the sins to which, prompted by nature, he is riveted by habit, seek those divine virtues which he has hated and shunned.

NO—JEHOVAH alone is our Righteousness. An Almighty Redeemer only could expiate our sins, enlighten us in the knowledge and will of GOD, and sanctify our corrupt souls. All the means of our justification are the work of a *divine* power. These gracious means were furnished, not only without any agency of man, but when he was in rebellion against the merciful GOD, whose purpose it was to save him. "When we were enemies," saith the apostle, "GOD reconciled us to himself." Let then "every mouth be stopped, and the whole world confess itself guilty in the sight of GOD." Let the sinner learn that the first step in his salvation is to humble himself as guilty and helpless, and adoring the unsearchable riches of GOD's grace, who hath pro-

vided the means of his justification, to glory in the "LORD his Righteousness."

2. But while we humbly acknowledge and adore the free grace of GOD in our salvation, let us remember that there are *qualifications on our part.*

The Savior is, indeed, plenteous in redemption; but he dispenses his mercies as Mediator only to those who come unto him. As a *Lawgiver*, he is infinitely perfect—but he enlightens in the knowledge of that law only the sincere and humble, who seek to know his will. As a *Sanctifier*, he is Almighty—but he grants his spirit only in use of those means which he has enjoined, and the rebellious and obstinate may resist, and quench his holy inspirations. There is salvation in no *other* but in CHRIST, JEHOVAH our *Righteousness.*

Would we then, my brethren, secure an interest in him, the only and all-sufficient Savior, let us go unto him, confessing our lost and miserable state, and casting ourselves on his infinite mercy and power as our *Mediator.* Blind as we are, by nature, to the excellence of divine truth, and indisposed to spiritual things, let us seek his illuminations, and submit ourselves to his authority, as our supreme and righteous *Lawgiver.* Corrupt and depraved as we are in our natural condition, let us implore his renovating grace as our Almighty *Sanctifier*, and attend on those ordinances of his Church, which are the means of conveying it. Thus let us seek the Savior, and we shall find him full of grace and truth—the LORD our Righteousness.

Blessed JESUS—be it unto us according to thy word. Pardon, enlighten, sanctify, and finally save us: that through the ages of eternity we may ascribe unto thee, JEHOVAH our *Righteousness*, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, all power, majesty, and dominion, for ever. Amen.

REBELLION AGAINST GOD:

A Sermon

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Isaiah i. 2.—"*Hear O heavens! and give ear O earth! for the* LORD *hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.*"

REBELLION is defined to be "an open and avowed renunciation of the authority of the government to which one owes allegiance." It is considered to imply a bitterer hostility than the violence or menaces of any foreign foe, since such a foe may have some equitable grounds for his opposition, and in any case breaks no bond of fealty. A rebel, by the very title which is applied to him, is supposed to resist where he ought to obey, and to injure where he ought to reverence. His crime, therefore, is considered the highest, perhaps, which can be perpetrated, and also the most excuseless.

If rebellion against a human government be thus criminal, by parity of reason, rebellion against the government of Heaven must be even *atrocious*. Yet the prophet declares, without preface to introduce, or qualification to soften, that the Israelites were rebels against their benignant Maker.

And, my hearers, had he made a similar averment, not with respect to you only, but to all transgressors, of every name and age, I am constrained to believe that his language would be literally true. In other words, I am constrained to believe that all sin partakes of the nature of rebellion. It is freely acknowledged that this is an idea, mortifying, repulsive, and even awful. It is freely acknowledged that the man who can utter it without pain, is destitute of all correct apprehensions concerning his own wants and exposures, and all genuine sympathy for the wants and exposures of his fellow-creatures. It is acknowledged, also, with equal freedom, that he who can utter it with feelings of triumph or denunciation, is actuated by a spirit scarcely less than diabolical.

At the same time it is maintained that, if it be true, it is of great,

nay, of infinite importance, that we should admit it, with all its humiliating consequences. To this every candid and honest mind will unquestionably accede.

Let us then, my brethren, carefully remembering how vast the interests it involves, approach the idea in question, and examine the evidence by which it is supported. Let us approach it with impartial minds and susceptive hearts, never forgetting that it is one in which the speaker is concerned as fully as his hearers—one therefore in relation to which there can be no motive for overstatement.

The criminality of rebellion must, of course, be affected by the nature of the government and administration against which it is exerted. It must be measured by the mildness and propriety of the system whose authority it renounces, and by the patience, lenity, and wisdom, with which that system is administered. If the government be despotic in its character, and administered with implacable or ferocious sternness, it can hardly be unlawful, and may be deserving of commendation. If the government be paternal in its character, and administered with paternal sensibilities, then it must be inexcusable and criminal to a degree absolutely appalling.

It becomes me, then, in the prosecution of this discourse, to dwell, to some extent, upon the nature of the divine government, and the manner in which its precepts are urged, and its sanctions enforced.

1. And, in the first place, you will remark that this government is paternal in the object of its precepts.

A despot seeks his own glory and pleasure rather than the benefit of his people. To him it matters not if his exactions contravene the most obvious and fundamental principles of justice, and drain the life-blood from thousands on thousands, so that *his* aims of conquest be accomplished, and *he* reign with broader sway, and more dazzling splendor. To him, too, it matters as little, if thousands on thousands are deprived of comforts, perhaps of necessaries, and compelled to toil, till worn out nature sinks beneath the imposition, so that *his* passions may be pampered, and *his* appetites glutted. Cared such men as Alexander, or Napoleon Bonaparte, think you, for the waste of life and treasure which their towering ambition cost? Cared such as Caracalla, or Helio-

gabalus, for the enormous expenditure with which their brutal desires were satiated? No, my hearers, they lived as though possessed by the idea that the world itself was made for *them*, and they enjoyed the inalienable right, as well as the indisputable power to sport with the temporal destinies of mankind.

Now it is the property of a father to look upon his children with sentiments completely different. He regards them as any thing but his slaves, or the menial instruments of his pleasures. He regards them, in themselves considered, as endowed with the same title to happiness as himself. He even reverences that title, and dare not abuse their sacred privileges for purposes at once degraded and selfish. And (which is more) he loves their happiness. He rejoices when they are glad. His continual aim, and one of his most delightful reversions, is to see their countenances illuminated, and their hearts expanded, by rational, pure, and innocent joy. All his discipline has no reference to his personal and independent advantage, but to their highest good. He is their governor, in the sense in which *that* word was often used in the languages from which it is derived. He is their *guide*—their guide to virtue, and its sublime and imperishable rewards.

Contemplate the exhibitions of His government and its economy, which God has made in Revelation, and see whether the same dispositions are not manifest in Him. He chooses to apply to himself the most encouraging and endearing epithets, in order to assure men of his tender and inexhaustible interest in their welfare. He calls himself their Shepherd, their Counsellor, their Deliverer, their Father. The whole scheme and tenor of Revelation are a beautiful and affecting illustration of the propriety and significance of these and other epithets, by which He is pleased to designate himself. The entire and simple aim of all and every one of his commands, and the motives by which He urges them, appears to be our advancement in knowledge, holiness, and felicity, that we may be fitted for his own presence, and intimate communion; for the exalted dignities and interminable bliss of the realms where his honor dwelleth. If men coincided with this aim, if they universally loved and obeyed His statutes, the world would be regenerated, moral evil would be annihilated, and Paradise be regained

in very deed. In the lofty language of the prophet, "the mountains and the hills would break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field would clap their hands:"—"triumph and everlasting joy would be upon our heads, we should obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing would flee away."

2. In the second place, we have a decided proof that the government of GOD is paternal in the length of His forbearance.

The forbearance of every other character has its limits, and in general is speedily exhausted; but the forbearance of a father has no measure. Remark, particularly, the unlikeness between the forbearance of a father and a guardian. The one will extend it so far as his *interest* or *reputation* may require. The other thinks not of *these* things, but of the shame and woe which will follow from the direful moment, when he shall say that the period of clemency has *ceased*, and that of retribution *come*. A guardian is soon weary of the multiplied and unabated excesses of his ward; his patience flags when repeated admonitions are unavailing; his pride is wounded when they are received with indifference or scorn, and if he be not constrained by obligations which he cannot abandon with honor, or by profits which he cannot relinquish with impunity, how soon will he cast forth the incorrigible stripling from his protection and guidance, and leave him to pursue his chosen way, and be filled with his own devices.

But a father "suffereth long, and is kind." Repeated failures, in admonition or correction, do not dishearten him. Unheeded counsel is urged with *earnestness* as fresh, and *eloquence* as pleading and warm, as ever! Disappointment succeeding disappointment, does not alienate his feelings, or kindle in his bosom the fire of revengeful indignation. He *suffers*, indeed; *suffers inexpressibly* more than *any* guardian can ever do. He is confounded by disobedience; he is stung by ingratitude; he is tortured by the withering spectacle of a child deliberately travelling that awful course, of which a sage, inspired by the ALMIGHTY, has affirmed that it is "the way of hell, going down to the chambers of death." Yet is he most reluctant to exchange these feelings for the more tolerable ones of anger and abhorrence. He pursues his unnatural offspring with warnings, entreaties, and proffers of for-

giveness; and when all beside have resigned him as altogether irrecoverable, he, hoping against hope, still clings to him, and soothes his harrassed heart with some fond promises of his ultimate redemption. Truly, says Solomon, "love is strong as death;" its empire, where it is *firmly* seated in the heart, is as complete and as resistless as that of the terrific king, to whose mighty sceptre every mortal is compelled to bow.

Now, again contemplate the administration of JEHOVAH, and see if it be not characterized by the dispositions of a father. Dwell upon the varied and ever wonderful history of the Jewish nation, and the proofs of these dispositions will become more and more conspicuous, until, like collected rays of light, they form a wide radiating beam of glory.

The Israelites forfeit the blessings of the covenant, times which cannot be repeated; but the favor of GOD, if discontinued, seems to brood over them, as though waiting for an opportunity to descend and bless them, and upon the first symptom of relenting and compunction, hastens down to enrich and sanctify them, and fill their hearts with joy and gladness. When repulsed, it goes not utterly away. Standing as it were aloof, it at one time, in the person of a prophet, pours forth the language of parental yearning, "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? i. e. to punishment. How shall I deliver thee Israel? i. e. to thine enemies. How shall I make the as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zaboim? [Cities overwhelmed in the fiery deluge, with Sodom and Gomorrah.] Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." At another, in the person of our Savior, it sheds compassion's precious tear, and utters its pathetic lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Who but a father—who but a father surpassing all below, that have honored this endearing name, could have borne so *long*, and so *meekly*, with the thankless, the wayward, the insensate, the audacious, the provoking! Who but a father, such as Heaven alone can furnish, would return

good for evil, and blessing for cursing, hundreds and thousands of years, and then, when any finite experimenter had utterly despaired, resolve to vanquish his enemies, not by terror, wasting and woe, but by the omnipotence of grace and mercy! Who, but a GOD, and a paternal GOD, would have closed such a strange and melancholy history as that of Israel, by sending "his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Truly, my hearers, there is no greater wonder, no deeper *mystery* than this. It seems any thing but the effusion of extravagance—it seems the most natural dictate of sober and calm conviction to exclaim with St. Paul, as he contemplated the unfathomable sagacity which could devise, and the peerless skill which could execute, such a transcendent purpose: "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are His determinations, and His ways past finding out!"

3. In the third and last place, you have an irrefragable proof that the government of GOD is paternal in the nature of His tenderness. It is not, my hearers, the tenderness of pity, it is the tenderness of love. The philanthropist commiserates the distresses of his fellow-creatures, and magnanimously resolves to meliorate them. But he is not animated by that *quick*, that *lively*, that *overpowering*, self-sacrificing tenderness, which prompts the exertion of a father in behalf of his suffering child. No; *that* tenderness shrinks from no expenditure, falters before no obstacles. And such was the tenderness of GOD; for it is not said that he so pitied, but that "he so *loved* the world, as to give his *only* begotten Son, that whosoever believeth upon him should not perish, but should have everlasting life."

We know not the value of the proof, and probably in *this* world shall never know it, but by feeble approximation. A glimpse of its worth dawns upon us when we read that he is GOD's *only* begotten or *well* beloved Son; that he is one in whom GOD is ever well pleased; one who dwelt in the bosom of divinity ere the worlds were formed; who thinks it no robbery to claim divine prerogatives and honors. But what finite mind can tell the

measureless excellence, the priceless estimation, the inseparable and all-hallowed ties which are intimated by language like this? The ideas which it embraces are too lofty for our perception. They reach even to heaven, and are lost amid the boundless expansion, and the incomprehensibilities of eternity,

We can approach such a proof of tenderness, as the gift of GOD'S blessed Son for our salvation, only through what we know of our imperfect selves. We know, for example, that a father can give no higher proof of his patriotism than by arming an only son, in whom his strongest affections centre, and on whom his proudest hopes repose, and bidding him go forth and shed his blood with freedom in fighting his country's battles. We see GOD sending one, on whom he bestows the most expressive appellations of endearment, and the loftiest titles of even supernal dignity; see Him sending such an one to assume the condition of a servant, to toil for his daily sustenance; to be poor and homeless; to be reviled, persecuted, condemned and crucified; and, in the most intolerable moments of a most intolerable death, to be forsaken, and to bear alone and unsustained his accumulated sufferings; and this, and all this, that his soul might be an offering for sin, and through his chastisement our spiritual maladies be healed.

My hearers, arguing as a finite being from such examples as our nature and history can furnish, might I not say, was it possible even for heaven to do more? But I forbear; I know that I am trespassing on the mysteries of an unseen and a future world, and leave the subject for heartfelt awe, and silent, yet overcoming admiration.

And now,—to return to the position for which these reflections upon the divine government and its administration have been brought to view,—if sin be the resistance of the commands and claims, the motives and expostulations, the grace and mercy, of One who has given us such illustrious proofs of his paternal regard and goodness—can it be other than rebellion? Can it be other than rebellion of an aggravated, nay, my hearers of a most *aggravated* character? The inference is dismal— is *tremendous!*—this is readily allowed; but can it fairly and logically be avoided? Would to GOD it might be, for it falls upon each and *all* of us

with a weight well nigh insupportable! but where is the acumen—indeed where is the sophistry which can evade it? To sin is to offend One, whose highest aim, in all his injunctions, and in all his discipline, is to train us for honor, and glory, and immortality. To sin is to offend One, whose forbearance prolongs a ten, a twenty, a hundred, a thousand times forfeited, space for repentance. To sin is to offend One, who gave his son (unspeakable gift!) for the redemption of the lost. Alas! my hearers, search the world, search the universe through, and *where* shall we find an offence against *higher* authority, longer *patience*, or purer *love*, than the sin of a child of man against his Heavenly Father? The consideration should silence every whisper of pretension to meritorious virtue, and stir up the sentiments of profound contrition. It should take every symptom of stubbornness away, and make us self-accusing, lowly, and broken hearted. My brethren, we call God Father, and it is an invaluable privilege that we are permitted so to do, since it assures us of mercy, when mercy otherwise were hopeless; but when we think of the aspect which his paternal relations to us give to sin, I know not the word throughout the Bible which should so prostrate and abase us. What! are we transgressors of a father's wisest and most lenient precepts? abusers of a father's most enlarged long suffering? contemners of a father's richest love? Oh, if God himself had not said otherwise, I should say, we must all, all despair. And does God bid sinners; does he bid us (as I dare not bid you nor myself to do, but on his own authority,) does he bid *us* hope? And will we not seize that hope, and cling to it? Will we not rest and fully rely upon that Savior who is its sure foundation? Will we not implore the patronage of that spirit who can increase and perfect it?

Then, verily, I know not whither we can go, nor where we can find salvation! Then, verily, I fear the Gospel is hid to us, and we are lost!

HYMN.

ON THE OFFICES OF CHRIST.

'T is from the treasures of his word
I borrow titles for my Lord;
Nor art, nor nature can supply
Sufficient forms of majesty.

Bright image of the Father's face,
Shining with undiminished rays;
Th' eternal God's eternal Son,
The heir, and partner of his throne.

The *King of kings*, the Lord *most High*,
Writes his own name upon his thigh:
He wears a garment dipped in blood,
And breaks the nations with his rod.

Where grace can neither melt nor move
The *Lamb* resents his injured love,
Awakes his wrath without delay,
And *Judah's lion* tears the prey.

But when for works of peace he comes,
What winning titles he assumes!
Light of the world, and *life of men;*
Nor bears those characters in vain.

With tender pity in his heart
He acts the *Mediator's* part;
A *friend* and *brother* he appears
And well fulfils the names he wears.

At length the *judge* his throne ascends,
Divides the rebels from his friends,
And saints in full fruition prove
His rich variety of love.

HYMN.

THE REBEL'S RETURN TO GOD.

When with my mind devoutly prest,
Dear Savior, my revolving breast
  Would past offences trace;
Trembling I make the black review,
Yet pleased behold, admiring too,
  The power of changing Grace.

This tongue, with blasphemies defiled,
These feet to erring paths beguiled,
  In heavenly league agree.
Who could believe such lips could praise,
Or think my dark and winding ways
  Should ever lead to thee!

These eyes that once abused their sight,
Now lift to thee their wat'ry light,
  And weep a silent flood:
These hands are raised in ceaseless prayer;
O, wash away the stains they wear,
  In pure redeeming blood.

These ears, that pleased could entertain
The midnight oath, the sportive strain,
  When round the festive board;
Now, deaf to all th' enchanting noise,
Avoid the throng, detest the joys,
  And press to hear thy Word.

Thus thou art served in every part:
O, wouldst thou more transform my heart,
  The drossy mass refine,
That grace might nature's strength control,
And a new creature—body, soul—
  Be Lord, for ever thine.